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## Viewing cable 06BRASILIA1511, BRAZIL GRANTS ASYLUM TO FARC TERRORIST

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06BRASILIA1511**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06BRASILIA1511</a>	<a href="#">2006-07-27 18:30</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Brasilia</a>

Appears in these articles:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 001511

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/2016  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [BR](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: BRAZIL GRANTS ASYLUM TO FARC TERRORIST

REF: BRASILIA 719

Classified By: PolCouns Dennis Hearne, 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. This is an action cable. Please see paragraph 10 for action request.

¶2. (C) Summary: The Colombian government has called on Brazil to reverse a July 14 decision to grant asylum to

wanted FARC terrorist Francisco Antonio Cadena. Some media in Brazil greeted the decision with speculation that the judicial asylum process was subverted by President Lula da Silva and elements of his Workers Party, who maintained close ties with FARC leader Cadena, who lived in Brazil before his arrest last year and who has a minor child with his Brazilian wife. The Colombian Embassy in Brasilia will meet July 28 with the head of the Brazilian refugee committee which granted the asylum request, apparently on the strength of a written statement by Cadena promising to sever all ties with the Colombian terrorist group, the FARC. The granting of asylum to a known terrorist flies in the face of Brazilian claims to oppose international terrorism. Particularly troubling are the allegations of the Presidency subverting the judicial process and pressuring the refugee committee to take a decision contrary to its own guidelines, allegations we find credible. We, like the Colombians, will try to discover the official rationale for the decision and how the GOB reconciles it with its public opposition to international terrorism. We would also appreciate instructions on other actions, if any, we should be taking. End Summary.

¶3. (C) In a decision taken and kept in secret, the Brazilian National Committee on Refuges (CONARE) July 14 granted political refugee status to Francisco Antonio Cadena Collazos (known in Brazil as Olivera Medina), the so-called Ambassador to Brazil of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), who was arrested in Brazil in August 2005 at the request of Interpol, based on a Colombian arrest warrant which included charges of murder for terrorist purposes, kidnapping, extortion and terrorism. The decision will make it impossible for Cadena to be extradited to Colombia as the Colombian government requested on August 24, 2005 (reftel).

¶4. (C) In a statement issued July 19 in Bogota, the Colombian government requested the Brazilian government to reconsider the decision to grant asylum to Cadena and reiterated its previous request for his extradition. The Political Counselor of the Colombian Embassy in Brasilia, Juan Manuel Gonzalez Ayerbe, pointed out to poloff July 27 that CONARE guidelines preclude the granting of asylum to persons who have committed war crimes or crimes against peace or humanity, heinous crimes or acts of terrorism or drug trafficking. Gonzalez added that, aside from providing an official notification of the decision through its Embassy in Bogota, the GOB had made no comment on the case to the Colombians and had not provided an official explanation of the decision. Gonzalez said that one of his contacts at the Brazilian Foreign Ministry had told him unofficially that Cadena had signed a statement saying he would cut all ties with the FARC, and that CONARE had made its decision on that basis.

¶5. (C) Gonzalez said the Colombia Embassy would meet July 28 with Luis Paulo Barreto, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, who serves as the chair of CONARE, to seek a full explanation and to reiterate its request that asylum be revoked and extradition proceed. CONARE's other members include the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Vice-Chair), Labor, Health, Education, the Federal Police, UNHCR and NGO's from Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. The press spokesman of the CONARE told the Embassy July 27 that all CONARE documents are confidential; there are no public records or press releases concerning decisions, neither are decisions published in the official government gazette. The rationale behind the secrecy is that persons requesting refugee status are assumed to be in danger, so their names cannot be released to the public.

¶6. (C) An article in the July 27 edition of the daily newspaper Correio Brasiliense repeated the claim made to the Colombian Embassy that the decision by CONARE was taken on account of Cadena's commitment to cease terrorist activities and quotes him as saying he will devote all his efforts from now on to taking care of his Brazilian family. The article notes that the Justice Ministry had denied there had been political pressure concerning the decision and gave assurances that the decision was taken for technical reasons.

That claim is at variance with what Correio reported in April (reftel).

¶7. (C) At that time, the daily reported that CONARE members were complaining that the Office of the Presidency had usurped the role of CONARE in assessing Cadena's asylum request, calling the action a dangerous precedent that politicized an issue that should be handled on its legal and technical merits. CONARE members accused Presidential International Affairs Advisor Marcos Aurelio Garcia of being behind the transfer of authority over the extradition request from the Foreign Ministry to the Office of the Presidency (The Colombian Ambassador echoed that view to the Charge, adding that Garcia was known to have "sympathy" for the FARC). An advisor to Garcia rejected the charge, saying Garcia was not involved in the issue.

¶8. (C) Counselor Gonzalez raised Garcia's name during our July 27 meeting as a key player in the decision-making process. He added that, during the many years Cadena spent in Brazil prior to his arrest last year, he had cultivated close ties with President Lula's Labor Party (PT) and had met with leaders of the PT in a house just outside of Brasilia (called the Red Heart Mansion) owned by a PT member of Congress. He also echoed press and other public accounts that PT leaders had met with Cadena in prison. While pointing out that claims of FARC donations to PT campaigns had never been proven, he insisted there was ample proof of Cadena's ties with PT leaders.

¶9. (C) Comment: The decision by the Brazilian committee is audacious but not necessarily surprising, as is the near silence surrounding it. Aside from a few articles in the Brazilian press, there has been little notice of the decision and no statements from Brazilian leftists (including those who have run a web site in support of his asylum claim) or the FARC itself. Of course, the GOB's silence on the issue is not surprising. Granting refugee status to a man accused of terrorism against a friendly, democratically elected government of a neighboring country is hardly the thing President Lula or his associates would be eager to defend publicly, especially since it would inevitably result during this election period in a new airing of the claims of FARC support for PT 2002 campaigns, possibly including Lula's. Embassy believes that high level political pressure resulted in this decision.

¶10. (C) Action Request: We, like the Colombians, will be trying to find out what the official rationale for the asylum decision was and how that can be reconciled with the GOB's supposed opposition to international terrorism. We would also appreciate instructions from Washington regarding other actions we should be taking.

Chicola